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Creating Community Anywhere

An interview with Carolyn Shaffer
by Kathy Juline

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Carolyn Shaffer, M.A., coauthor of Creating Community Anywhere, has been pioneering new forms of community since 1970. Her company, Growing Community Associates, P.O. Box 5415, Berkeley, CA 94705, consults with organizations and trains individuals in community-building skills.

Kathy Juline: *Your book Creating Community Anywhere suggests a great need these days for community building. What factors contribute to this need?*

Shaffer: Many forms of community that served people in generations past—such as the extended family—no longer exist or have become rare. And the family itself has changed. Children are being raised in one-parent households and many single people are living alone. Also, people are putting in more time at the workplace; often both mother and father work outside the home. The neighborhood is a less naturally cohesive area, less the center of people's lives than it used to be when people walked to nearby stores. Neighbors don't meet one another on the way to the post office to pick up their mail.

In some areas fear of crime tends to keep them indoors. These are signs of how community is not happening naturally. It's no longer a part of the way we live and work and play. We have to create it.

I define community as a group of people who are committed for the long term to their own, one another's, and their group's well-being. There are certain characteristics of a fully functioning community, certain activities groups engage in. They do things together, they participate in common practices, they depend on one another, they make decisions together, and they identify themselves as larger than the sum of their individual relationships.

KJ: *You distinguish between "functional" and "conscious" community. What is the difference?*

CS: The *functional* community involves an experience similar to what happens in extended families. People take care of one another in practical ways; everyone is housed, fed, and educated. All the basic social needs are met by the community. *Conscious* community includes a concern for the growth of the members' spiritual and emotional needs as well as their physical, social, educational, and health requirements. Another aspect of conscious community is that it reflects on itself. It asks, "How are we doing? What's working? What's not working?"

There is also a third type, called *deep community*, which is very rare these days but may become more common. Deep community is a more natural expression of conscious community. Now, as groups develop conscious community, they have procedures and formats. Their agreements are all spelled out in a linear way. But in a deep community these matters are a part of people's being. They don't have to call a meeting to have deep community...it just happens. And this is, I trust, what we're moving toward.

KJ: In what way is the oneness of life acknowledged by the concept of community?

CS: Spiritual traditions have been teaching about the unity of life for millennia. In fairly modern times, Western society broke away from these traditions and developed a rational, analytic approach that focused on the separate parts rather than the whole. During the Age of Enlightenment, when this philosophy of individualism took root, people believed we weren't, by nature, connected, but were all separate individuals. Now we're finding that we are all inter-related, that we are one.

The new physics is returning us to an understanding of the oneness and the connectedness of all life. Physicists are finding that matter is not ultimately particulate; sometimes it measures as a particle and other times as a wave. They're learning that all they can really know about are the *relationships* within the material world. So relationship may be at the basis of physical reality. It's interesting what that implies about the human community: that relationship, rather than the separate individuals who come together, is the deeper reality. We don't lose our individuality by being part of a system or by being part of a community.

There are some fears, often having a strong basis in people's early family experience, which cause people to resist the idea of community. The individual child was not honored but had to fit in, obey and submit to the adults—and sometimes was abused. Being raised in an authoritarian culture, which requires submission to the larger group, causes people

to feel they have lost their individuality. If they try to express themselves, they are crushed. We have ancient, cellular memories of the crushing of our individuality throughout history, when people who were expressing something different were considered a threat and were destroyed. So, as we go into community, those old fears come up. What we need is a healthy sense of community that respects the individual, honors the whole, and does not see differences as threatening.

We can develop safe procedures, so people will be heard and respected. We can let differences be okay rather than a threat and provide opportunities for people to talk about these differences. One of the simplest ways to develop the kind of trust and respect that can help people overcome these old patterns is to tell one another our stories.

Telling our stories involves saying, "This is where I am right now, this is the kind of day I'm having, this is what's happening in my life. Here is where I come into this meeting or this group activity." Each person takes a turn doing that. Then, if problems come up, everyone understands each other better. The key thing is that as you're telling your story, no one can interrupt you, take issue with you, or give advice. You have uninterrupted time to speak and to be heard. That helps you to feel safe, respected and to drop old fears from past conditioning.

KJ: So community is a place where people can find acceptance without the need to wear the kinds of disguises that society often requires.

CS: Yes. In a conscious community, people can bring their whole self to the gathering and not have to wear masks. They can bare their soul, revealing what's behind those masks. In so doing, they learn to take responsibility for their feelings rather than projecting them onto other people. The great part about being in community is that other people are there to help you. You have a supportive group with which to explore aspects of yourself you want to develop



I have become much more able to articulate my ideas and to stand up for myself if I disagree with someone. A healthy community needs individuals who stand up for what they believe, even if it means disagreeing with others, because everyone has a piece of the truth.

Communities follow the "systems" or "holistic" model, so each person in a community is vitally important to the whole. Each person is an essential part of it and the group loses if people aren't encouraged and supported in speaking their truth, even though that truth might be uncomfortable for the group.

In one community I participated in, we were going through a financial crisis and some people didn't want to bring it to the forefront. They feared that talking openly about financial problems would harm the enterprise. But one investor's spontaneous outburst served to lance the boil of denial. Her feelings came tumbling out and then other people's feelings came out, so we were able to get to the deeper problems and bring unconscious material to the surface. We were able to deal openly and honestly with the financial issues and with all the emotional concerns as well. We came through the crisis healthier than if we had tried to make ourselves look good and just keep wearing masks.

KJ: In what sense is community an attitude and a process rather than a structure?

CS: At heart, community has to be a process which is honored. Often people go right to the forms and miss the quality of relationship they want. Or they get stuck in forms that don't work because they haven't paid attention to the essence or quality of relationship they desire. People who want to build a community together need to keep going back to the essence of what they're seeking, back to the quality of relating they want, then allow forms to develop that honor and help those qualities to express.

Good examples [of these qualities] are acceptance of one another, respect, and cooperation. I suggest to people who are first creating community, or

yearning for it, that they go inside, into their own soul, and tune in to what they want. Take time to daydream, but be careful about getting caught up in the outer forms. Ask yourself: "What does Community mean to me? What is it I'm yearning for? What is the quality of relationship I seek?" Go back in time and ask yourself when, in the past, you experienced a certain quality you now yearn for.

When I asked some of these questions, I suddenly remembered being back in my grandmother's house. There was something about her I yearned to experience again. I realized that it was her loving acceptance of me and everyone else. She just sat there and radiated acceptance and love. The grandchildren could go to her with their problems and not have to worry about her putting them down or moralizing. So I realized that for me, a quality of loving acceptance was important.

KJ: What are some of the types of communities that are forming these days?

CS: In *Creating Community Anywhere*, we divide communities into two essential types—those where people live together and those where they don't, but connect and function together as a community. Some exciting forms in both of those categories are developing, such as when people who don't have a biologically related family commit to one another.

For example, a single woman—a graduate student with two young children—made a conscious decision to focus her friendship network on people who were willing to be there for her and her children. Over the years she developed a whole extended family. One young man, also a graduate student, became like an uncle, a surrogate father, to her children. He has stayed involved in their lives and one of the children is now becoming an "uncle" to this man's new son. So their community is continuing.

The workplace is another form of non-residential community, though developing true community there may not be easy due to the power issues and the old hierarchical, authoritarian models involved. But when team-building is achieved, when those in

authority are willing to let go and trust the team, functioning communities can evolve.

What's happening today in terms of residential community is basically a revival of traditional forms, like the neighborhood community, but with a more conscious awareness and more respect for diversity. During earlier times, in the old neighborhoods, if you fit in, you were supported; these were often tightly knit, ethnic communities that took care of their own people. If you were different, however, you had a tough time. As these traditional forms are now being revitalized, we see a greater respect for differences. I think that's absolutely necessary in today's world in order to counteract the polarization, violence, and breakdown of the social fabric we're experiencing.

Forming an association is one way people are reviving their neighborhood communities. In meetings that initially focused on zoning concerns, members of one neighborhood group began talking to one another about their dreams for the neighborhood. Soon they began to create a very attractive city park. Now this neighborhood holds a wonderful Fourth of July celebration, and every Christmas they have a bonfire and caroling. They have block captains who keep track of who's new in the neighborhood, who's having a baby, who's old and needs attention, or who's sick or in the hospital. They really began taking care of one another in the old-fashioned way.

KJ: Can you describe communities which chose to live together in an even closer relationship?

CS: Co-housing is the name for one approach where people join together, buy land, and plan a whole development which they either build or adapt from existing property. In the San Francisco Bay Area, a warehouse has been turned into a co-housing center where people have their individual units with kitchens. Residents maintain their privacy and autonomy, but they also have their communal space, such as a larger kitchen and dining room, a common library, workshop space, a play-space for the kids, even office spaces they can share. This kind of

arrangement combines the advantages of the individual private unit with the common shared space. Members of these communities develop a deep trust of and closeness with one another, because they've worked through the whole planning process together. Parents love these places because their children can play in a safe area with other adults watching them.

In addition to safety, there are other benefits these residential communities offer. You always have the option to share meals. If you do sign up to share meals, you might only have to cook once a month. The rest of the time you come home from work and find a prepared meal waiting for you. Child care is also shared. Often there's a diversity of people—with singles, couples, families, and older people whose children are grown—so the singles can have an experience of children and parents can get some relief from child care. Residents of the community don't have to work hard to find friends and to socialize.

KJ: Can you talk about the kind of conscious community where people come together because of a common spiritual orientation?

CS: Some communities have a long history of deep spiritual focus, vision, or purpose larger than the individuals themselves. These communities have been functioning, especially over the last twenty or thirty years, as research and development centers for the larger society. The participants are committed twenty-four hours a day to work with their group dynamics, to learn as they go, and often to provide service to the larger community in some way. The Findhorn Community in Scotland is a good example of this. A conscious, intentional, visionary community, it was established for the purpose of helping the planet reconnect with Spirit and nature, and also renew deep, ancient, intuitive ways of connecting with one another, with plants and animals, and with Spirit and Earth. What has impressed me about Findhorn is the way it has grown groups of people and helped people learn how to function in groups by using group attunement as part of the process and by developing new forms of group decision-making and leadership.

KJ: *Are there communities in the United States that are modeled after Findhorn and are contributing to society as a whole?*

CS: Yes. A good example is Sirius Community in Massachusetts, founded by Gordon Davidson and Corinne McLaughlin, who are former members of Findhorn. They now are developing a conference center and they do educational work in the local area and at universities in the Massachusetts and Washington D.C. areas. One of their latest functions is to support people who are involved in working with AIDS and HIV-positive patients. People of diverse cultural and racial background go to Sirius for educational programs, which helps bring different segments of the population together.

Other visionary communities in this country are developing and sharing their particular knowledge, experience, and wisdom. For example, Alpha Farm in Oregon—which is a real, working farm in a small, rural community—has developed a consensus decision-making process and one of the founders is now teaching it to corporations, to nonprofit groups and government agencies. Other communitarians have developed conflict-resolution procedures and are offering training to large corporations, such as General Motors and Boeing. The Farm, in Tennessee, has developed sustainable ways of living in harmony with the ecological system. Members of that community now consult with the government of Tennessee and have gained the respect of Vice President Al Gore. They also work with Third World countries and in the ghettos in the United States. People from The Farm go and feed the hungry and train people in the skills they've learned. Many other communities are also involved in this kind of service.

KJ: *What is the process communities go through in realizing their vision?*

CS: The phases of community development closely follow the developmental phases that people go through, both individually and in relationship. We call them phases rather than stages because often they recur, like the phases of the moon. You think

you've passed through that power-struggle phase, but you're going to come back to it at a higher level and you'll deal with it in a more mature fashion.

We've identified five phases. The first one is the *excitement* phase. In couple relationships, this is called the honeymoon phase. Scott Peck has called this "pseudo-community," because people are being nice. They're telling little white lies and still wearing their masks. It's a wonderful phase and can be full of excitement, joy and possibilities. It's when you really bond together around your common vision and everybody thinks, "We want to do this together. The possibilities are endless."

Soon the honeymoon phase is over and the excitement begins to turn into an awareness of limitations, personality flaws, and differences. People feel less harmonious. Sometimes they leave; they feel they can't rock the boat because that would mean they're not cooperating. We call this the harmony trap. When people think they have to maintain harmony at all costs, they may actually be preventing the community from progressing to the next phase—which is *autonomy*, or *jockeying for power*. It's often called the power-struggle phase, akin to what Scott Peck calls "chaos."

During this phase communities feel as if they are failing, when really they're moving to the next phase of development, on their way to stability. Individual members need to begin asserting their autonomy and expressing their differences in group meetings so they can learn how to deal with their differences and how to argue in fair and productive ways. It's the same with a couple. If a couple stayed at the honeymoon phase, they'd have a very superficial relationship. No one is going to be the end-all and be-all for the other. In expecting that, we're projecting our hopes and dreams onto the other person rather than seeing that person as who he or she is. The same thing happens in community. People need to learn how to disagree without disconnecting through conflict. It's like an adolescent having to rebel or disconnect in some way from the parent to become a full adult. The members of the community must learn how to disagree with one

another, so they can become a stable community with a solid foundation.

The third phase is *stability*. It's where people develop procedures and become involved in roles and specific functions, perhaps setting up various agreements or decision-making processes. But there's a danger in stability; some people want to hang on to it and stay in their roles. You see this in couples, where each person takes on a different function. It can be comforting but also stifling.

By keeping things moving, a community can enter the next phase, called *synergy*, which is when the group possibilities are allowed to unfold. This happens in a group when people begin rotating leadership. Those who were followers learn how to assume more responsibility, and those who were leaders learn to trust the process and not need to control so much. When synergy is reached, people are able to flow into these roles. They express their individuality as well as take the group as a whole and its needs into account. A natural organic process results.

Then after synergy comes what we call *transformation*. At some point, as in the life of an individual, a community may no longer work in the form it originally stabilized. The community may choose to end. Some communities have a certain lifespan, after which its members move on to do other things. Or the community may expand in some way. It's changing that old form. It is letting go, dying to the old form, so a new form can be born. This new form may be an expansion, a new level of growth, or a community may divide into several communities, each of which has its own special projects.

KJ: What are some action-steps our readers can take if they want to join or to form a community?

CS: The first step is to go within to become aware of what qualities you want in a community. Give some thought to the forms that support those qualities. Do you want a community that includes children? Do you want a neighborhood association? Get clear about your vision. Go back to those memories

of what worked for you in the past, what felt like the kind of quality you want. That can be a barometer, to let you know when you're connecting with the people you will find compatible.

In the book, we suggest doing what we call the Social Web Exercise, which helps a person take stock. It raises such questions as: What's already going on in my life? What connections do I already have? Who are the people I want to go deeper with? Then, when you're ready, begin reaching out to people who have similar interests and desires. Have potlucks together to explore your ideas; hold roundtables if you're more intellectually oriented and want to discuss issues. If something doesn't succeed, don't give up. It's so simple. You don't need money or land. You just need deep, committed friendship and a willingness to take the risk to commit, to reach out.

KJ: Will you comment on the healing impact of community on both the individual and the world?

CS: First of all, being in community has a very practical, positive effect on physical health. People who are in groups of committed friends and family are healthier and live longer. That's been shown scientifically to be true. Also, as we learn to communicate honestly and to solve our problems together in a peaceful and respectful way, we are creating models and experiences from which the rest of the world can benefit. We are affecting others. This has to do with the mystery of being parts of a whole system.

As parts of a whole system, we are connected not only with one another but also with the entire natural world. Every time we take a breath we're breathing oxygen the rain forest generates. As we begin to respect one another as human beings, I hope we also begin to respect Earth, the rivers, the trees, the animals, the land—and take all that into consideration in our decision-making. I feel that every time we learn to disagree without disconnecting, to communicate clearly, and to accept and welcome one another into a community, we are creating the possibility of cooperating on a planetary level.



Raven Rocks

by Warren Stetzel

What follows is text taken from the 1994 annual "story card" which is given to each purchaser of a Raven Rocks Christmas tree. Each year, for over 20 years, these "story cards" have told a different story/theme along with photographs, and given tips on the care of the newly cut Christmas tree.

"It's a 60/40 world," philosopher Gerald Heard observed. In a 60/40 world, try as you might, you can get things only about 60% right. That other 40%—the part that's not quite right—it's there to keep you trying, keep you learning and growing. It keeps you on your toes.

When Heard made these observations, he wasn't complaining that our world is stacked against us. Nor was he exposing a human nature that forever dreams of perfection, and then botches the effort. There's nothing in Heard's insight that would diminish the urge to get things "just right."

What Heard *would* diminish is our sense of failure when we don't quite make it. Rather than to walk away in defeat, we're meant to try again—and again—knowing that taking new aim and making another, better try is of far more use to us than attainment of any perfection could ever be.

A 60/40 world is a world alive, changing. It is forever throwing up in our path new notions of what perfection might be. We pursue ever-expanding

dreams in a 60/40 world, all the while growing in our capacity to dream, and to pursue those dreams. Twenty-four years ago, nineteen of us decided we would buy 843 acres of scenic hills and ravines in southeast Ohio. We would save this place, called Raven Rocks, from strip mining, and make it a permanent preserve instead. To get the place paid for—in those early days, that seemed like perfection. We seized upon the closest source of income at hand—some 50,000 Christmas trees that former owners had planted on the property. We plunged into the Christmas tree business, volunteering our time to do all the work.

Of course, we intended to grow perfect trees. Twenty-four years later, though, we still don't entirely agree what a perfect Christmas tree should look like. Perfection continues to elude us, but the pursuit of it has produced a quality of tree that, along with the fact that the labor was voluntary, let us pay that first debt sooner than we had dreamed possible.

But, long before that day, our notions of what it would take to make Raven Rocks a perfect preserved area had changed dramatically. They had expanded. Though more than 200 acres have already been added, more needs to be done to improve boundaries so that important watershed and ravine areas will be included in the preserve.

But boundaries are not the only imperfections. We became aware that Raven Rocks was going to be unacceptably imperfect, and would become increasingly imperfect over the years, if the effects of such things as acid rain and the greenhouse effect were not diminished. The forests, the rock formations, and the land itself cannot indefinitely withstand their effects. Our efforts, we knew, had to address these problems. We had to find better ways to farm and garden, to build homes, to heat and cool, cook and refrigerate.

Out of this awareness were born a number of projects, some of them almost as demanding as the purchase of the land itself. All have benefited from the wonderful workings of this 60/40 world. No-

where can this be seen more clearly than in the Locust Hill project. Begun in 1972 by our largest household, what was intended to be a home has evolved into a demonstration underground solar building, as well.

When architect Malcolm Wells produced his first plans for this earth-covered structure, we were delighted. They seemed perfect—they were so far beyond our dreams. But before we'd carried construction beyond excavation and some concrete footers, we discovered that perhaps the most perfect thing about these plans was that they opened to us possibilities we had never thought of before, possibilities this design could not meet. We halted construction, and set a new course.

The next design pursued these new possibilities in exciting ways. Besides being more efficient, this building sought solar sources for what energy it would require. Most dramatic was the plan to so shape the building that it would serve as a giant wind-energy dynamo. Wind would race uphill and then up the sloped face, and get compressed in a duct on top. This venturi effect would double its speed, increasing its energy by eight times, as wind tunnel tests at M.I.T. demonstrated. Magazines and newspapers, across the country and abroad, wrote it up. It was perfect. Except, as it turned out, it could not work in the real world.

Now, several changes later, the design that is taking shape on Locust Hill lets us incorporate seven solar strategies in one building. Wrestling in a 60/40 world has made this building so much more efficient, so much more useful, so much more fun, that we thank our lucky stars that we never got any of the earlier ones built.

Such are the benefits of a 60/40 world.

Starting about December 2, Raven Rocks Christmas trees are sold in Ohio, in Columbus at Great Southern Shopping Center, where South High intersects 270, and in the Wheeling area at the Big Bear Plus store on National Road, Bridgeport, Ohio.

A Look at Religious Communitarianism

by Mike Cummings & Harv Bishop

reprinted from the Spring 1995 issue of Communities: Journal of Cooperative Living. Four issue subscription, \$18; sample issue, \$5; Communities, Rt. 4, Box 169-C, Louisa, VA 23093.

More than one person has reminded us that our questionnaire data from the 1993 Celebration of Communities gathering in Olympia, Washington, should not be generalized to all communitarians. We are thankful to our co-researcher, Ruth Lambach, for dramatically broadening our sample to include several hundred former residents of Bruderhof and Hutterite communities.

We were excited to learn how many, if any, of our results from the gathering would apply to members and former members of these far more traditional and more religious Anabaptist groups. What follows are preliminary results from the first three dozen respondents who formerly lived in either a Hutterite or a Bruderhof community. Like our gathering sample, these respondents are evenly split between men and women. The findings are striking.

The several hundred Hutterite colonies now existing in the north-central United States and south-central Canada date back to the 16th-century Protestant Reformation in Central Europe, and specifically to their martyred founder, Jacob Huter. The Swiss- and German-based Anabaptists, including Hutterites, Mennonites, and Amish, rejected the Christian sacrament of infant baptism, believing that only adults could meaningfully choose to join the church. Hutterite Anabaptism interpreted passages in the Bible, especially in the Book of Acts, to imply that Jesus and his disciples lived together and held all goods in common, and that true Christians should do likewise.

Over the next four centuries, persecution forced the Hutterites to migrate from central Europe to Russia and eventually to North America. During World

War I, the anti-German and pro-war sentiment drove these pacifist, German-speaking agriculturalists from South Dakota and Montana to Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. In the 1930's, many of the Hutterites returned to the United States. They have been expanding steadily ever since; they now number around 40,000 members living in over 350 colonies.

In the 1920's, Eberhard Arnold founded the Bruderhof, a German-speaking, pacifist, communistic sect similar to the Hutterites in many respects. Persecution forced the Bruderhof to migrate from central Europe to England, then to South America, and in the last 40 years to the northeastern United States, where a half-dozen sizeable communities now practice small crafts and industry.

When Eberhard Arnold discovered the similarities between his own community and those of the Hutterites, he sought affiliation with the much older and larger Hutterite movement. Bruderhof communities, compared to old-line Hutterites, are less ascetic, more artistic, more favorably disposed toward higher education, and less isolated from the outside world. But the two groups share a commitment to religious practice, nonviolence, German as a first language, male political leadership, collective ownership, and tight-knit communal living that protects members from outside "worldly" influence.

Just as data about new age and secular communities cannot be generalized to more traditional, religious ones, ex-members of communities—secular or religious—are likely to differ from current members. We plan to expand our sample to include current Bruderhof residents in the near future. Meanwhile, keep in mind that the present findings reflect answers given by those who, for various reasons, decided to leave their Hutterite or Bruderhof communities.

Why did our religious community ex-member respondents (henceforth called "ex-members") leave their communities? Several said they were asked to leave, while others most often noted a change in themselves or dissatisfaction with the community. The last two reasons, not expulsion, were cited most

often among our past communarians from the gathering. What features of religious community life are most criticized by those who chose to leave? Three factors stand out, with many respondents citing all three: arbitrary or authoritarian leaders, pressures to conform, and a lack of opportunity to fulfill one's potential. Positive aspects of community life most often mentioned by these ex-members were financial and physical security, the companionship of friends, and a variety of community-support mechanisms, including education and daycare for children.

Our gathering respondents reported similar positive features, but did not report disliked leaders or conformity as serious problems. They expressed the most concern about interpersonal conflicts, individuals who try to exercise inappropriate control, and the time and energy consumed by consensus decision making (which, however, they valued).

We found it noteworthy that despite the fact that the ex-members had chosen to leave their communities and very few have sought an alternative community, nonetheless they more often rate their overall community experience positively, rather than negatively. About half the ex-members rate their community experience as "very positive" or "more positive than negative." The remainder are about evenly split in describing their community experience as "evenly mixed" or "more negative than positive" and "very negative." A few reported that they found no redeeming features in community life.

Almost none of the ex-members wanted to give communal life another try. Has their experience living in religious communities soured them on religion as well? Apparently not, at least for the two-thirds of the ex-members now practicing as, Catholics, Jews, Southern Baptists and Mennonites. A third of the ex-members expressed no preference or non-traditional spirituality.

Religion and spirituality find broad support among the ex-member sample. Almost three-quarters agreed with the statement, "life without spirituality is empty." 18% agreed with the statement, "belief in

God is a comforting illusion," while 41% disagreed and 41% were neutral. Regarding the statement, "religion is the opiate of the masses," 35% of ex-members rejected it while 27% agreed and 39% were neutral.

Beliefs about politics and economics clearly distinguish the ex-members from our gathering sample. Survey research generally shows that people who are more religious are more conservative than others, and our two sample groups bear out this expectation—the ex-members are decidedly more conservative than the gathering sample. Not a single respondent from the gathering was a Republican, while 31% of the ex-members are Republicans, 25% Democrats, and 38% independent. Whereas a sixth of the gathering respondents were Greens, only one of the ex-members was affiliated with a Green Party. While 70% of the gathering respondents preferred Green parties as "the wave of the future," the ex-members split in thirds on this item, with one third agreeing, one third disagreeing, and one third unsure.

The relative conservatism of the ex-members held up on a number of more specific political measures. For instance, 97% of the ex-members agreed that, "people need to provide for themselves, and not be dependent on the government"; 61% agreed that "it's natural for people to want to live among members of their own race"; and 85% of ex-members agreed with the statement that "all in all, the U.S. is a good place to live." Gathering respondents scored lower on all of these items; i.e. they were less conservative.

On the issue of whether society should guarantee the basic necessities of life for citizens, a majority of both communitarian groups agreed, but the ex-members less decisively. Likewise, on the survey statement, "despite democratic elections, the U.S. is actually run by small groups of powerful cliques," a majority of both groups agreed: 75% of ex-members and 92% of gathering respondents. Half of ex-members, and three-fifths of gathering respondents agreed with the statement "the major U.S. institutions are ineffective or corrupt." Half of the ex-

members agreed with the statement, "Democrats and Republicans are birds of a feather," compared with three-quarters from the gathering.

These critical perspectives on mainstream politics do *not* imply a political drop-out syndrome: 58% of the ex-members, and 79% of the gathering respondents rejected the statement, "political activity is useless"; 86% of the ex-members and 77% from the gathering said that they "regularly vote in Federal, state and local elections."

Consensus was the overwhelming decision-making preference of gathering respondents, while it was chosen by only 20% of the ex-members. The ex-members do not clearly favor any one method over another, although only two chose "powerful, inspiring leaders." Most preferred "majority rule", "accountable leaders", or "a flexible combination of processes with an emphasis on accountability."

The ex-members are skeptical of communal ownership, which they had experienced in Hutterite or Bruderhof communities. When asked about the best form of ownership almost half chose "by private individuals." The remainder chose combinations of individual, family and cooperative forms. By comparison, half of our current communitarians from the gathering favored communal ownership, while our past communitarians from the gathering tended to prefer a mix of individual, small-group, and communal ownership.

Most gathering respondents were optimistic about the future of the Communities Movement generally. In contrast, the ex-members split into four roughly equal groups on this question. One saw the future as positive, another as negative, a third as dependent on many factors, and a fourth as uncertain.

We look forward to receiving more questionnaires from current and past communitarians and to reporting our findings to readers. If you would like to participate in our survey, please contact us c/o Department of Political Science, University of Colorado at Denver, P.O. Box 173364, Denver, CO 80217; 303/556-3556.

Conflict Resolution in Community: Achieving Consensus

Community Service Conference, October 20-22

This year our fall conference will be on Conflict Resolution and Achieving Consensus. It will be held in Yellow Springs Friday evening, October 20 through Sunday noon, October 22, at the Outdoor Education Center in Glen Helen, the beautiful 1000 acre nature preserve belonging to Antioch College.

Julie Mazo, from Shannon Farm, an intentional community in Afton, VA, will be with us. She has been working as a mediator in conflict resolution since 1967. She has worked to resolve conflict between French and English speaking Canadians, disputes in academia, state bureaucracies, national and local service organizations and in both corporations and small businesses. She has also provided training in the skills of mediation, consensus-building, problem-solving and conflict management. Marianne MacQueen, a resident of Yellow Springs, will also be a resource person. She has a masters degree in Conflict Resolution from Antioch University and has been for several years coordinator of the Mediation Program of the Village of Yellow Springs.

There will always be different points of view which may lead to conflict. This actually is good and need not cause difficulties; it should lead to finding ways of listening to each other and finding new solutions.

Since all of us live in one or more communities, ether intentional, general, school or workplace, we all have need to learn more about skills for problem solving. Our goals are to be responsible, effective agents for resolving differences in our communities and to strengthen community support for dealing with differences constructively.

As consciousness grows about the kinds of participation that influences the group in positive or negative ways, the potential for constructive participation expands. The more people are exposed to the skills of managing conflict, the quicker the commu-

nity's style of handling differences will become more satisfying and comfortable.

Eliminating differences is not the goal. Even if that were possible, their absence would deprive the community of the richness that diversity brings. The challenge is to work with the whole spectrum of views to arrive at a resolution that respects all positions and can be accepted by those concerned. To meet that challenge requires skills to help different sides walk in the shoes of the opposing parties and thereby gain a greater appreciation of the other's experience. It requires nurturing the perception that mutual satisfaction is more desirable than having winners and losers.

Julie Mazo will give the keynote talk Friday evening on "The Challenge of Conflict in Community." This will be followed by participants breaking into small groups to discuss their experiences of community conflicts and how they may be handled. Then there will be a panel consisting of Michael Lang (chair), Maire Dugan (co-chair) and HongGong Yang, who are faculty at Antioch University's McGregor School Conflict Resolution Program, and Marianne and Julie, to explore possible ways of dealing with the types of conflicts presented by the participants.

Saturday morning attendees will experience an actual conflict situation in a meeting context facilitated by Julie. In the afternoon those attending will have a chance to practice what they are learning in mock conflict situations. Saturday evening Linden Qualls will lead cooperative games.

Costs for those coming from a distance and registering before October 1st will be \$70 or \$50, depending on whether one needs hospitality arranged for him or her. After October 1st registration for the entire conference is \$85 or \$65. Local persons may attend for \$5 a session, exclusive of meals.

This gathering is for anyone who is interested in helping resolve community or group conflict. Join us in this opportunity to examine causes of community conflict and ways to dealing with it, utilizing

techniques presented by the facilitators as well as experiences of participants. For more details about the conference or if you have not received our conference brochure and registration form, write or call us at P.O. Box 243, Yellow Springs, OH 45387; 513/767-2161 or 767-1461.



Excerpts from the 60th Annual Ernest Morgan Family Letter

Christine has been at home now for over a year. She is not visibly better or worse than she was a year ago, but she is happier. Friends visit her almost every day and her daughters have visited repeatedly.

Ernest is thriving. True, at 90 his eyesight is somewhat diminished. He gets around with a cane and takes frequent naps. But he continues as Corresponding Secretary of Celo Community, writes articles and letters and accepts frequent speaking engagements. And he takes care of Christine. He does an occasional printing job.

Up ahead he has important challenges. Major among these is the training of a successor in the AMS printshop and the launching of a new printed product which he thinks can put the printshop firmly on track for the future.

Ernest has taken over the job of finding a publisher for Christine's *Alabaster Village*, and is very hopeful. He is less hopeful of finding a publisher for

Elizabeth Morgan's book of Socialist and Labor Songs. Happily, his book, *Dealing Creatively with Death*, is going strong in its 13th edition.

The Arthur Morgan School is thriving, with a fine staff, full enrollment and a balanced budget. We are happy to see Elizabeth Morgan's life going forward in this way. The completion of 33 years of the school has been punctuated by a beautiful new building to house the kitchen, dining room, offices and assembly room. A symbol of stability and permanence, this called for the financial rallying of foundations and friends— including the staff, who opted to delay a raise in salary to help make the building possible. A gathering was held at the school July 2 for a joint celebration of the new building and Ernest's 90th birthday.

Another source of satisfaction is the resounding success of the Antioch Publishing Company, which Ernest launched in 1926 as the Antioch Bookplate Company. Now a multinational corporation, the decimal point of its sales has been twice moved upwards since Ernest's son Lee took over the management in 1970. More important, in Ernest's view, the firm has gone forward with his social philosophy and is now employee-owned.

Taking all things together, Christine and Ernest have been enjoying a happy and satisfying old age. How long this will go on, no one can say. Ernest adds to the family message some urgent philosophical and social commentary.

First of all, let me say that, despite the vicissitudes of age I am taking keen delight in my declining years. The prospect of my not-very-distant death does not worry me. I long since accepted my place in nature, in which birth and death are universal and natural.

I revel in the experience of this moment in eternity and in this spot in the universe. The earth and sky, the sun, moon and stars are part of the universe which I share. So also are the myriad life forms with which I am surrounded. Likewise the evolution of my own species from a one-celled ocean organ-

ism to the complex creatures of which I am one—with our remarkable sensibilities and comprehension. Then there is the complex human culture which I share and the technology which I see all about me. What a marvelous privilege to have this experience for a whole lifetime!

I see my life as a thread in the fabric of humanity, helping to give it strength and color. It is in this fabric that my long-time identity resides. That is my immortality. While the prospect of my own death does not worry me, I do worry about the future of humanity and of the earth.

In our own country, the dominance of greed and exploitation has resulted in extreme and rising inequalities of ownership and income. This gives rise to massive poverty and crime. It means that the mass of American citizens do not have sufficient income to buy what they produce.

Only by the astronomical expansion of debt does our economic system keep running. The Federal debt alone is now close to five thousand billion dollars. The private debt is comparable, and both are rising fast. The military, of course, is the major component in generating this debt. We spend more on the military than the next ten nations combined. When we stop borrowing we crash—unless we have the wisdom and the will to restructure our economy. Our leaders fail to recognize this.

An even more serious worry is the state of the world. The human population is exploding by almost a quarter of a million per day. The ozone layer is shrinking. The earth is warming. Millions of tons of topsoil are lost each year. The forests are being destroyed. The ocean organisms which produce most of our oxygen are diminishing. So also are the fish, which are an important source of our food.

The time has come to face these problems. We need to quiet our egos, refine our values, cherish one another, control our numbers, simplify our lifestyles and tackle these problems—if we really care about our grandchildren.

Reader's Write

About Community Service Newsletter

Recently I read a friends copy of the January-March issue of your fine newsletter (currently we are not subscribing [because] we are building a home.) On pg. 14 the quotation at the top of the page is by Albert Schweitzer. I collect quotations, some of which I will share with you here.

There is another aspect of life on the land; while working in forest or garden a man has time for meditation and indeed his very act is devotion. He becomes in tune with the Infinite. The miracle of growth and the season's changes induce a sense of wonderment and call forth worship from his inner being and in this sense work becomes worship.
Richard St. Barbe Baker, "My Life My Trees" pp.16

Work is love made visible. And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy.
Kahlil Gibran

Hank Nadu, Gordonville, PA

Enclosed is our money order for 2 copies of the April-June newsletter which I wish to give to friends who are active in community development. I was particularly taken by the interview with Mr. Bercuvitz, on Community Animation, and by the article on conflict resolution by Ms. Mazo. Ernest Morgan's talk was, as always, illuminating. In short, I find CSN to contain as much meat within a small compass as a 48-page to 96-page news magazine of the 'Time' or 'Maclean's' type. This, to assure you that your efforts are not going unnoticed, and to thank you for them.

Norman McKinney, Toronto, Ontario

I particularly enjoyed Ernest Morgan's "Dimensions of Community." Good luck.

Madeline Williams, W. Vancouver, B.C.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

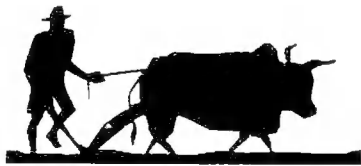
Room and Board for the Right Woman

No immediate help is needed in taking care of my wife Christine at the present time, but I don't want her to go into a nursing home if I should die or be disabled, as I am 90 years old. So I need to have someone to provide care should the need arise. For now the person would have no duties to perform. The only immediate requirement would be to learn the ropes, and that will be expedited by detailed instructions which I am writing about her care. Should the person be called upon to assume Christine's care there would be a salary in addition to board and room. The exact amount is to be worked out and would depend on the degree of care involved. Supplementary care would be arranged as needed. Previous nursing experience is not required.

This situation would be excellent for a single woman whose occupation is writing, editing, art, or special studies which could be done at home. A person with a child would also be possible. She could continue her other activities, since Christine's care takes only a fraction of a caretaker's time. I am able to take naps during the day and carry on office projects without difficulty. Christine rarely calls for me at night.

We have friends who come in for an hour or so to relieve me so that I can work in the printshop or attend meetings. We are located in Celo Community, close to the Arthur Morgan School, where there is good fellowship. The person would have the use of a well-equipped office and library.

Persons interested are invited to drop in, discuss the matter and look the place over. Contact Ernest Morgan, 1901 Hannah Branch Road, Burnsville, NC 28714, 704/675-4361.



Growing Home: An Introduction to Permaculture Design and Bioregional Living

This workshop will be held at Greenfire at Pilgrim Hills, Brinkhaven, Ohio with instructors Peter Bane and Chuck Marsh on October 27-28, 11:30 a.m. Friday-4:30 p.m. Saturday.

We are living on a planet in crisis. The political and economic systems that have given rise to our modern consumer lifestyle have created societies that consume more than they produce. The products and byproducts of this consumer culture are destroying Earth's biosphere and life support systems.

Permaculture is the conscious design of "cultivated" ecosystems that have the diversity, stability, and resilience of natural ecosystems. It is a harmonious integration of people into the Landscape in such a way that the land grows in richness, productivity, and aesthetic beauty. Permaculture is an ethical design system for creating human environments that are ecologically sound and economically viable. Permaculture systems provide for their own needs, do not exploit or pollute, and are therefore sustainable.

To make the transition toward a sustainable society it is imperative that we take responsibility for our own lives and meet our basic needs for food, shelter, energy, gainful employment, and supportive community. The purpose of this course is to offer you practical training in Permaculture design principles so that you can begin the application of these skills within your local community.

Topics at the workshop will include: Permaculture Philosophy, Bioregional Lifeways, Ethics & Design Principles, Natural Systems Dynamics, Observation & Mapping Skills, Farm & Garden Design (for optimum yield with minimum labor), Tools & Appropriate Technology, and Community Economics.

The workshop includes overnight lodging and four meals with registration fee of \$85.00. For more information call: Mary or Dick Hogan 614/969-4353 or Bill Wealand 800/282-0740.



Fifteenth Annual E.F. Schumacher Lectures

Speakers will be: Paul Hawken, author of *The Ecology of Commerce*, former businessman, and one of today's foremost visionaries concerning business and sustainability; Catherine Sneed, founder of the San Francisco County Jail Horticulture Program and founder/director of The Garden Project; and Kent Whealy, director and co-founder of the Seed Savers Exchange, working globally to maintain and distribute endangered vegetable and fruit varieties.

Place: Sheffield-Strathcona Hall (SSS), Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. Time: Saturday, October 21, 1995; 10:30-4:00, with a lunch break from 12:00-1:00. Cost is \$20 per person, \$15 per member of the Society, \$7 for students. Information is available from the E.F. Schumacher Society, Box 76A, RD3, Great Barrington, MA 01230, 413/528-1737, or the Yale Student Environmental Coalition, Box 4663, Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520, 203/432-7222.

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Membership

Membership is a means of supporting and sharing the work of Community Service. The Basic \$25 annual membership contribution includes a subscription to our bimonthly Newsletter and 10% off Community Service-published literature. Larger contributions are always needed, however, and smaller ones will be gladly accepted. Community Service is a nonprofit corporation which depends on contributions and the sale of literature to fund its work so that it can offer its services to those who need them. All contributions are appreciated, needed and tax-deductible. Due to added postage costs, foreign membership, including Canada, is \$30 in U.S. currency.

Have Your Friends Seen The Newsletter?

Please send the names and addresses of your friends who might enjoy receiving a sample Newsletter and booklist. If you wish specific issues sent, please send \$1 per copy.

Editor's Note

We welcome letters to the editor (under 300 words) and articles (700-2000 words) about any notable communities or people who are improving the quality of life in their communities. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you wish the article returned. The only compensation we can offer is the satisfaction of seeing your words in print and knowing you have helped spread encouraging and/or educational information.

Editor's Note #2

We occasionally exchange our mailing list with a group with similar purposes, such as the Arthur Morgan School at Celo or Communities Magazine. If you do not wish us to give your name to anyone, please let us know.

Address Change

If there is an error on your mailing label, or you are moving, please send the old label and any corrections to us. It increases our cost greatly if the Post Office notifies us of moves, and you will not receive your newsletter promptly.

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You can tell when your Community Service membership expires by looking at the month and year in the upper left corner of your mailing label. Please renew your membership if it has expired or will expire before 9/95. The annual membership contribution is \$25. We do not send individual reminders to renew.

Community Service, Inc.
P.O. Box 243
Yellow Springs, OH 45387

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